

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A REPORT OF SECRETARY OF STATE

RELATING TO NEGOTIATIONS

FOR THE

SUPPRESSION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

JANUARY 15, 1821,

Referred to the Committee on so much of the President's Message
as relates to the Slave Trade.

WASHINGTON:

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1821.

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I transmit to the House of Representatives a report from the Secretary of State, with the enclosed documents, relating to the negotiation for the suppression of the slave trade, which should have accompanied a message on that subject communicated to the House some time since, but which were accidentally omitted.

JAMES MONROE.

WASHINGTON, *January 12*, 1821.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

January 11, 1821.

The Secretary of State has the honor of submitting to the President a copy of a despatch from the minister of the United States at London, enclosing documents relating to the negotiation for the suppression of the slave trade, which should have been transmitted with those accompanying the message of the President, to the House of Representatives, of the 4th instant, but which were accidentally omitted.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS 

LIST OF PAPERS.


Extracts of a letter from Mr. Rush to the Secretary of State, dated 19th November, 1819.

Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Rush, 11th November, 1819.—Copy.

Address from House of Commons, 7th July, 1819, to the Prince Regent.—Copy.

Address from House of Lords, 9th July, 1819, to the Prince Regent.—Copy.

Mr. Rush to Lord Castlereagh, 16th November, 1819.—Copy.



Extracts of a letter from Mr. Rush to the Secretary of State, dated
LONDON, November 19, 1819.

"I received, on the 14th instant, a note from lord Castlereagh, dated the eleventh, on the subject of the slave trade. The addresses from the House of Commons and House of Lords, to the Prince Regent, came with it. As the whole purport of this communication has been detailed, beforehand, in my last despatch, I am not aware that any further explanations from me are now requisite.

"The distinct testimony which is borne, in both these addresses, to the United States having been first in point of time among the nations of the world to abolish the trade, will be perceived with satisfaction. It is, so far as I know, the first occasion upon which the acknowledgment has been made, in any official or authentic manner, by any state in Europe.

"It appeared to me prudent to frame an answer of entire conciliation to lord Castlereagh's note; and I hope that the spirit which it breathes may meet the President's approbation. It bears date on the sixteenth, and is among the enclosures transmitted herewith."

Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Rush.

FOREIGN OFFICE, 11th Nov. 1819.

The undersigned, his majesty's principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has the honor to transmit to Mr. Rush, by command of the Prince Regent, copy of addresses which were presented by both houses of parliament at the close of the last session to his royal highness, which his royal highness has to request Mr. Rush will lay before the President, with an intimation that it is the Prince Regent's earnest desire to enter, without delay, into discussion with the government of the United States upon the important subject to which those addresses refer, and in the successful accomplishment of which, the common feelings and reputation of both states are equally and deeply involved.

It has occurred to the Prince Regent's government, that the difficulties which have hitherto operated to prevent a common system of concert and prevention as directed against the illicit slave trade, between the two governments, could be most satisfactorily examined

by selecting Washington for the seat of deliberation. Under this impression the undersigned has delayed to transmit to Mr. Rush the addresses in question, till he could accompany them with some proposition to be conveyed to the government of the United States for giving practical effect to the views of parliament.

The undersigned having lately had the honor of acquainting Mr. Rush that Mr. Stratford Canning had been selected by the Prince Regent to replace Mr. Bagot, as his envoy and minister plenipotentiary in America, and as that gentleman will proceed to his mission early in the spring, and will carry with him full instructions on this subject, the undersigned has to request Mr. Rush will invite his government on the part of the Prince Regent, to enter as soon as may be, after Mr. Canning's arrival, upon the proposed discussions.

Upon a subject so deeply interesting to humanity, the government of the United States can never require any other impulse than that of its moral principles to awaken it to exertion; but, whatever of aid good offices can contribute to smooth the way for an amicable and advantageous proceeding on such a matter, the undersigned is convinced will be supplied by Mr. Rush's zeal and enlightened attachment to the success of the great cause which this inquiry involves; and in this view the communication is specially recommended to his personal support and protection.

The undersigned avails himself of this opportunity to renew to Mr. Rush the assurances of his distinguished consideration.

CASTLEREAGH.

Mercurie 7 die Julie, 1819.

Resolved, "That an humble address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, to assure his royal highness that we acknowledge, with becoming thankfulness, the zealous and persevering efforts which, in conformity with former addresses of this house, his royal highness has made for accomplishing the total annihilation of the African slave trade by all the foreign powers whose subjects have hitherto been engaged in it.

"That we also congratulate his royal highness on the success with which his efforts have been already attended; that guilty traffic having been declared by the concurrent voice of all the great powers of Europe, assembled in congress, to be repugnant to the principles of humanity and of universal morality.

"That, consequently, on this declaration, all the states whose subjects were formerly concerned in this criminal traffic have since prohibited it, the greater part absolutely and entirely; some for a time, particularly on that part of the coast of Africa only which is

to the north of the line; of the two states which still tolerate the traffic, one will soon cease to be thus distinguished, the period which Spain has solemnly fixed for the total abolition of the trade being near at hand: one power alone has hitherto forborne to specify any period when the traffic shall be absolutely abandoned.

“That the United States of America were honorably distinguished as the first which pronounced the condemnation of this guilty traffic; and that they have since successively passed various laws for carrying their prohibition into effect: that, nevertheless, we cannot but hear, with feelings of deep regret, that, notwithstanding the strong condemnation of the crime by all the great powers of Europe, and by the United States of America, there is reason to fear that the measures which have been hitherto adopted for actually suppressing these crimes are not yet adequate to their purpose.

“That we never, however, can admit the persuasion, that so great and generous a people as that of France, which has condemned this guilty commerce in the strongest terms, will be less earnest than ourselves to wipe away so foul a blot on the character of a Christian people.

“That we are, if possible, still less willing to admit such a supposition in the instance of the United States, a people derived originally from the same common stock with ourselves, and favored like ourselves in a degree hitherto, perhaps, unequalled in the history of the world, with the enjoyment of religious and civil liberty, and all their attendant blessings.

“That the consciousness that the government of this country was originally instrumental in leading the Americans into this criminal course, must naturally prompt us to call on them the more importunately to join us in endeavoring to put an end to the evils of which it is productive.

“That we also conceive, that the establishment of some concert and co-operation in the measures to be taken by the different powers for the execution of their common purpose, may, in various respects, be of great practical utility, and that, under the impression of this persuasion, several of the European states have already entered into conventional arrangements for seizing vessels engaged in the criminal traffic, and for bringing to punishment those who shall still be guilty of these nefarious practices.

“That we, therefore, supplicate his royal highness to renew his beneficent endeavors, more especially with the governments of France and of the United States of America, for the effectual attainment of an object which we all profess equally to have in view, and we cannot but indulge the confident hope that these efforts may yet, ere long, produce their desired effect, may ensure the practical enforcement of principles universally acknowledged to be undeniably just and true, and may obtain for the long afflicted people of Africa the actual termination of their wrongs and miseries, and may destroy forever that fatal barrier which, by obstructing the ordinary course of civilization and social improvement, has so long kept a large portion of the

globe in darkness and barbarism, and rendered its connexion with the civilized and Christian nations of the earth a fruitful source only of wretchedness and desolation.

Ordered, "That the said address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, by such members of the house as are of his majesty's most honorable privy council.

G. DYSON.

U. D. Dom. Com.

An address precisely similar was voted about the same time, and presented, in due course, by the House of Lords.

Die Veneris, 9 Julie, 1819.

Ordered, *Nemine Dissentiente*, by the lords spiritual and temporal in Parliament assembled, That an humble address, &c.

Resolved, That an humble address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, to assure his royal highness that we acknowledge, with becoming thankfulness, the zealous and persevering efforts which, in conformity with former addresses of this House, his royal highness has made for accomplishing the total annihilation of the African slave trade by all the foreign powers whose subjects had hitherto been engaged in it.

That we also congratulate his royal highness on the success with which his efforts have been already attended—that guilty traffic having been declared, by the concurrent voice of all the great powers of Europe assembled in Congress, to be repugnant to the principles of humanity, and of universal morality.

That, consequently, in this declaration, all the states whose subjects were formerly concerned in this criminal traffic have since prohibited it, the greater part absolutely and entirely, some for a time, partially, on that part of the coast of Africa only which is to the north of the line. Of the two states which still tolerate the traffic, one will soon cease to be thus distinguished, the period which Spain has solemnly fixed for the total abolition of the trade being near at hand. One power alone has hitherto forborne to specify any period when the traffic shall be absolutely abandoned.

That the United States of America were honorably distinguished as the first which pronounced the condemnation of this guilty traffic, and that they have since successively passed various laws for carrying their prohibition into effect. That, nevertheless, we cannot but hear, with feelings of deep regret, that, notwithstanding the strong condemnation of the crime by all the great powers of Europe, and by the United States of America, there is reason to fear that the measures which have been hitherto adopted for actually suppressing these crimes are not adequate to their purpose.

That we never, however, can admit the persuasion that so great

and generous a people as that of France, which has condemned this guilty commerce in the strongest terms, will be less earnest than ourselves to wipe away so foul a blot in the character of a Christian people.

That we are, if possible, still less willing to admit such a supposition in the instance of the United States, a people derived originally from the same common stock with ourselves, and favored, like ourselves, in a degree hitherto perhaps unequalled in the history of the world, with the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, and all their attendant blessings.

That the consciousness that the government of this country was originally instrumental in leading the Americans into this criminal course, must naturally prompt us to call on them the more importunately to join us in endeavoring to put an entire end to the evils of which it is productive.

That we also conceive that the establishment of some concert and co-operation in the measures to be taken by the different powers for the execution of their common purpose, may, in various respects, be of great practical utility; and that, under the impression of this persuasion, several of the European states have already entered into conventional arrangements for seizing vessels engaged in the criminal traffic, and for bringing to punishment those who shall still be guilty of these nefarious practices.

That we, therefore, supplicate his royal highness to renew his beneficent endeavors, more especially with the governments of France and of the United States of America, for the effectual attainment of an object which we all profess equally to have in view; and we cannot but indulge the confident hope that these efforts may yet, ere long, produce their desired effect, may ensure the practical enforcement of principles universally acknowledged to be undeniably just and true, and may destroy forever that fatal barrier, which, by obstructing the ordinary course of civilization and social improvement, has so long kept a large portion of the globe in darkness and barbarism, and rendered its connexion with the civilized and Christian nations of the earth a fruitful source only of wretchedness and desolation.

Ordered, That the said address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, by the lords with white staves.

Mr. Rush to Lord Castlereagh.

LONDON, 16th November, 1819.

The undersigned, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary from the United States, has the honor to present his compliments to lord Castlereagh, and to acknowledge the receipt of his note of the 11th of this month.

The copies of the addresses to his royal highness, the Prince Regent, from both houses of Parliament, at the close of the last session, respecting the slave trade, which, by command of his royal highness, came enclosed in his lordship's note, with a request that they might be laid before the President, the undersigned will lose no time in transmitting to the Secretary of State with that view. The intimation of its being the earnest desire of the Prince Regent to enter, without delay, into discussions with the United States, upon the important subject to which these addresses refer, and in the successful accomplishment of which the two nations have a common interest, will, the undersigned is persuaded, be met by his government in the same spirit of elevated benevolence which has given birth to the desire in the mind of his royal highness.

The undersigned cannot avoid expressing his acquiescence in the opinion that the difficulties which have hitherto operated to prevent a system of concert against the illicit slave trade between the two governments, are most likely to be satisfactorily examined by selecting Washington as the seat of deliberation. If, happily, they are of a nature to be removed, it is by such a transfer of the scene of a new endeavor that the best hopes may be formed; and it is hence, with a peculiar satisfaction that the undersigned learns, that Mr. Canning, when proceeding on his mission to the United States, will carry with him such full instructions upon the whole subject as may prepare him for entering upon the interesting duty of giving effect to the views of Parliament. The undersigned will not fail to make known this intention to his government, by the earliest opportunity that he can command.

Upon a subject so universally interesting to humanity, Lord Castlereagh has justly inferred that the government of the United States can never require any other incentive than that of its own moral impulse to awaken it to exertion. But, if, upon the present occasion, it needed any other, the undersigned must be permitted to say that it would be abundantly found in the friendly and enlarged spirit of this renewed overture from the government of the Prince Regent, and in the liberal justice rendered to the early and steadfast efforts of the United States in the cause of abolition, by the addresses in question, from both houses of the Parliament of this realm. Following up their uniform policy in this great cause, never tired of adopting new expedients of prohibition, where new evasions have pointed to their necessity, the undersigned feels happy in being able to state, feeling sure that the information cannot be otherwise than acceptable to the unwearied and useful zeal of his lordship in the same cause, that, besides the law of April, 1818, of which the undersigned had the honor to speak in his note of the twenty-first of December of that year, a subsequent act of Congress, of date so recent as last March, has raised up additional means for the extirpation of the baleful traffic. By this act the President is specially authorized to employ armed vessels of the United States to cruise upon the coasts of Africa; and other new provisions are introduced for intercepting and punishing

such delinquent citizens as may be found forgetful of the denunciations of their government, no less than of their own moral duties, abandoning themselves to the enormity of this transgression. It is well known that the sentiments of the President are in full and active harmony with those of Congress, in the beneficent desire of putting a stop to this deep-rooted and afflicting evil. With such pledges before the world, the undersigned cannot err in confidently anticipating that the fresh proposals of the government of his royal highness will be promptly taken up at Washington, under the deepest convictions of their importance, and with every anxious desire for a favorable result that can be made compatible with the constitution and other essential interests of the republic.

The undersigned is happy to embrace this occasion of renewing to lord Castlereagh the assurances of his distinguished consideration.

RICHARD RUSH.